THE CHURCH MONTHLY

Volume 4 OCTOBER, 1930 *Number* 12

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Photo by Wm. Fox

The Opening Services in the Riverside Church, October 5, 1930.

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Moral Experimentation

By Harry Emerson Fosdick

THERE is no need to enlarge upon the kind of conduct commonly coved by the phrase "moral experimentation." Any one who keeps his eyes open knows what it popularly means. Indeed, it is impossible to understand the way many young people look at life without taking moral experimentation into account. On the one side stand the old codes of behavior retaining still a good deal of respectability but, if rumor tells the truth, more honored in the breach than in the observance, and over against these ancient codes of behavior, smelling somewhat musty and mid-Victorian now in the nostrils of youth, are the interesting and adventurous moral experimenters. They have left the conventional safeties and decencies of the old codes and have taken to the open road. Open road? One might better say, the open fields. They will go anywhere across lots and try anything once. In comparison, therefore, with those who stay inside the codal fences, they carry the air and challenge of pioneers, and sometimes they even take the tone of sacrifice as though the future of mankind depended on the dash and daring of their moral ventures.

Now, we may be sure that if the choice does lie thus between fixed and rigid codes on one side and daring experimentation with new ways of living on the other, youth will try experimentation. All honor to youth for that! If, therefore, we cannot easily endure seeing so many young people identifying moral experimentation with loose self-indulgence and so falling into the perditions in which that kind of living always issues, we need to get the truth of this matter straightened out.

Is that picture which I just have drawn and which so many people have in their minds today a true one: the fenced yard of respectability on one side, static, dull, uninteresting, where the conventional moralists live, and out there the pioneers, the trail-blazers and adventurers who have broken over the old fences and are trying daring experiments with new ways of life? It is that way of picturing the situation that is undoing multitudes of our generation, and the picture is false.

Consider one fact: that the most outstanding and influential moral experimenter in history was Jesus Christ himself. He broke away from the codes of his people and in consequence was crucified. They saw him leaping the fences of their ethical codes and overpassing their carefully built regulations, and they hated him. He was an experimenter. He moved out into new ranges of moral life saying, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven." His Cross is the measure of the daring with which he broke away from old codes, but, mark this! he broke up, not down. He

experimented with new possibilities in goodness, not with fresh styles in badness. He pioneered the development of those constructive forces that build society and not those low self-indulgences that break society to pieces.

Young men and women, for it is to you especially I speak, this is the real choice, not between fixed and rigid codes on one side and moral experimentation on the other. No intelligent man, in a moving world, wants a fixed and rigid code. The real choice is between two kinds of moral experimentation, up or down.

This is the Lenten season and we may well picture our truth in a scene colored with the meanings of these serious weeks. On that last night, in the Garden of Gethsemane, we are told Jesus left the major group of his disciples at the garden's edge, took the best of them, Peter, James, and John, farther in beneath the olive trees, and then we read that beyond them "he went a little farther." That is a summary of all his life: "he went a little farther." Not believe in moral experimentation? But Jesus himself always was a pioneer. He always pushed out beyond the mass of men and beyond the best of men and went a little farther.

You see, then, that this morning we are not arguing against moral experimentation; we are arguing for it. Only, let us beware what meaning we put into that phrase. For in a generation that as much as any in history is calling for intelligent and courageous experimentation with life, all the way from what a man can do with his own soul by prayer to what we can do in the world by applying the Kellogg Pact to international relationships, see how many people are interpreting moral experimentation! They experiment with looseness. They experiment with self-indulgently letting themselves go. They experiment with seeing how far down they can go into hell and not be badly burnt. They are pioneering swamps, not the heights. They are burlesquing one of the most indispensable things in human life. Over against that caricature we may well put today the reality, the spirit of him who always went a little farther.

In the first place, consider how deeply rooted this whole matter of experimentation is in life. We commonly say that our generation is notable for the breakdown of old codes and that it is not so easy for us as for our fathers to plot our courses because so many channels have become unbuoyed. That is true. But behind all this special difficulty in our generation lies the basic fact: life essentially is experiment and it always has been. No human being ever asked to be born upon this strange globe whirling in the sky, and no human being, when he got here, ever knew what was going to happen a day ahead. Life essentially is experiment. Indeed, when life stops experimenting, it is done for.

Consider the oyster. He experimented for a while, and then he stopped. He put the skeleton upon the outside and dug himself in. But pioneering life moved past him, trying how it would work out to put the skeleton inside and the nerves outside, until at last man appeared and consciously learned to see that experimentation is alike his fate and his glory. From Abraham leaving Ur of the Chaldees, not knowing whither he went, to the last aviator trying the newest wrinkle in airplanes, mankind's hopes depend on tireless, patient, persistent experimentation. Let us quit complaining, then, about moral experimentation. We are in for that. Life inevitably forces that upon us, and, bound as we are to try experiments with moral living, we know well enough, my friends, whether we are experimenting up or down. We understand clearly enough in what direction our moral explorations move.

Nero was a moral experimenter. He tried every new quirk in vice his minions could suggest or his wit devise. And his contemporary, Paul, was a moral experimenter. When he wrote the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians he was moving out so far into a new idea of love that he had to use a fresh Greek word to ex-

press it, so stained with unholy meanings was the old vocabulary. Lord Byron was an ethical experimenter singularly like many of those brilliant cads we have in our time, and Lord Shaftesbury was a moral experimenter too, leaving behind him a record of improved labor conditions in England that has enshrined him forever in the nation's heart.

The choice is not, and it never has been, between static codes on one side and moral experimentation on the other. The choice is, and it always has been, between two kinds of moral experimentation.

Who said that real goodness meant sitting behind a conventional moral fence? The men who left this nation free from slavery, for example, were men like William Lloyd Garrison, who took his life in his hands and pioneered; men like Wendell Phillips, the abolitionist, going out to speak in an unpopular cause with his wife's admonition ringing in his ears, "Wendell, don't shilly-shally!" Was Wendell Phillips universally loved then for his ethical venturesomeness? Loved? One judge in Massachusetts, when he heard that Wendell Phillips was dead, announced that he could not possibly attend the funeral but he wished it understood that he thoroughly approved of it. A real goodness that has lifted mankind from the stone age up has always been adventurous and sometimes dangerous moral experimentation.

To all of which some young man here may say, I am not William Lloyd Garrison or Wendell Phillips; I am an ordinary man. I am taking you for that, an ordinary man. In one of our mid-western universities sometime ago they unveiled a tablet to an ordinary man. During his four years of undergraduate life he had taken part in all college activities but never had been president of a club. He had gone in for football for four years but never had played on a first team or been allowed in an important game. His scholastic grade averaged B plus. When the Great War came he served in the medical corps and one day he met his death trying to aid a wounded man under fire. The French Government posthumously awarded him the Croix de Guerre. Then in his mid-western Alma Mater they unveiled a tablet to his honor and on it this inscription stands: "He played four years on the scrubs—he never quit." Aye! four years on the scrubs and never quit! The world needs such men just as much as it needs the Garrisons and Phillipses, and whether they experiment with goodness or with looseness makes all the difference in the world.

Wanted moral experimenters ordinary and extraordinary! Experimenters in goodwill! How bitter the world is! What acid lines run between color and color and nation and nation! And there is no royal road out, no formula, no magic that will solve the problem, only moral experimenters who will push goodwill out to see how far they can make it work in every social relationship. Experimenters in magnanimity! How resentful the world is! how compact with vindictiveness! And preaching by itself does little good; only moral experimenters, as Jesus said, trying out forgiveness even seventy times seven and seeing how far they can make magnanimity work.

When Edward Everett Hale came to his eightieth birthday they gave him a public ovation in the city of Boston and at its close he rose to speak. Dr. Faunce heard him and always remembered what he said: "I do not think anybody in the world ever had so many friends as I have had. However, I once had an enemy, a determined enemy, and I have been trying all day to remember his name." Ah, if we had more experimenters in that kind of forgetfulness! Experimenters with their own souls—learning the high art of controlling temper, keeping sweet, making it easier for those who live with them to live at their best, mastering the technique of rising above trouble, overcoming sin, and making even moral failure a road to victory. My

friends, a great deal depends on scientific experimentation in these next years, but even more depends on such moral experimentation. Ah, Christ of the Garden of Gethsemane, how you challenge us! The mass of men here, the best of men there, but always you went a little farther.

In the second place, consider how very urgent this is in personal and social life. It is true that our fathers were protected by widely recognized moral codes in a way that we are not. It is true that there were channels in the old generation well buoyed out by commonly accepted ideas of good and evil and that now, some of those channels having been lost sight of, multitudes of people confusedly are fumbling their moral way through life without much sense of guidance. Worse still, many who in the old generation would have been protected from their worst selves by those old codes are now being forced to try out life for themselves, and they are trying out the bad lands. One is reminded of Phillips Brooks' figure, that if you opened up the cages of a menagerie, the eagle would take to the sky and the snake to the grass. Aye, this release from old codes, this necessity of using freedom is dangerous to the unprepared youth. He experiments down. I wish I could lift up over the horizon of some life here, so tempted this morning, a vision of those realms of personal character and social welfare in this modern world that are fairly crying for ethical experimenters to try them out.

What is sin? Sometimes I suspect that sin is mainly living in the presence of something beautiful, full of possibility and hope for humankind, and not seeing it, not experimenting with it but trying your hand at something low instead. Remember that comment, for example, made to young John Keats by his former guardian, who was still his financial trustee. Here it is, a scornful remark made to Keats by a man who would not help him experiment with his brilliant gift. "Well, John," he said, "I have read your book, and it reminds me of the Quaker's horse which was hard to catch, and good for nothing when caught. So your book is hard to understand and good for nothing when it is understood." That is sin: to stand in the presence of something beautiful and not see it nor want to experiment with it.

What was Judas' sin from which once more in these memorial days the world shrinks? Judas lived in the presence of the most beautiful character of all time, inviting him to spiritual experiments that have in fact turned out to be the most important ever tried in history, and Judas did not see it, experimented with something else instead, tried his hand at the old low game of getting thirty pieces of silver somehow by hook or crook. Through such sordidness he passed to his great betrayal. That is sin.

Many wild men and women in this modern age think that what we Christians want is to get them back behind the fence, manacle and confine them in an old code. What nonsense! Moral experimenters we all are and moral experimenters we ought to be. When some of us see moral wildness we do not think at all, If we could only pen him up! but what we do think is this: To walk amid the glorious opportunities for moral experiment, such as personal character and social progress in this age offer, like dogs through a picture gallery, not seeing the meaning of it, sticking their noses into low corners instead of lifting their eyes to high possibilities—that is a way of failing at life more utter and complete than any other. For this is an alluring and serious time in which to live. On every side are opportunities for personal character and social progress that lift up hands saying, Try me out! experiment with me! see what you can do with me! Every one that has eyes to see must see them. Every one that has ears to hear must hear them. And see what some of us are experimenting with!

We are facing here in morals the same situation which the eighteenth century faced in poetry. There was a classical age of poetry: Pope and Dryden were its representatives. It had its code of versification.

Clipped and concise couplets were the rule. And then the code went to pieces, the classical age fell apart and the romantic movement in poetry swept in like many waters. Some results were dreadful, about as bad sentimental slush as could be written. Some writers, freed from codes, were experimenting down. But to our everlasting enrichment some experimented up, and so came Wordsworth and Shelley and Keats. That is a parable in poetry of what we face today in morals. On which side shall we be?

Consider, for example, the problem of the family, where so much of our contemporary discussion centers. I understand well that much of the experimentation in new forms of family life carried on by young people is largely verbal. Youths today are just like youths in all generations —they love to sound worse than they act. But whether in talking or acting, is it not true that multitudes of modern people have in the background of their minds the picture of a monogamous family as an ancient institution with fixed and rigid codes? And since this is a time for moral experimentation, they are all for getting away from that and trying something else. Since, then, it is much more difficult to build something else than to attack what is here, their talking and their writing are largely assaults, often very well justified assaults, upon the faults of the monogamous family. There are firms in New York that do nothing except tear down buildings. They never construct anything; they are wrecking firms. So is a good deal of our talk and writing about the family, and as thus we conceive moral experimentation in terms of breaking away from the monogamous home we have in the background a picture of the monogamous home as an ancient institution, guarded by fixed and rigid codes.

We never are going to understand the family question until we get this much clear: the monogamous family is the experiment, the most significant and promising experiment ever tried. Every form of marital relationship has been tried repeatedly. Polygamy—that has been experimented with across the centuries on a continental scale. Polyandry—that has been tried endlessly. Promiscuity—ad infinitum and ad nauseam has that been tried.

Ever and again you hear misguided moderns talking about an experiment such as trial marriage as though it were new. New? It is ancient. The proper attitude toward trial marriage is that taken by an intelligent Chinese toward Bolshevism in China. He said that the Chinese did not in the least fear Bolshevism in China because they had tried that experiment three thousand years ago and it had not worked. So trial marriage was tried long ago.

At last, however, mankind essayed a new and marvelous experiment. One man and one woman loving each other so much that they did not want to love anybody else in the same way at all, and so living loyally together and rearing their children in an unbroken home—that is the experiment. Can it be made to work? Change the legal provisions that govern it. Alter the circumstances that surround it. That is inevitable in a changing world, but, let us never forget that this kind of home is the most important experiment in human relationship ever tried. What is more, that is the kind of home you young people want. Behind all your talk there is not a boy nor a girl here who would not rather have that kind of home than anything else on earth. May God give you a chance to try, and may he crown your experiment with success, because the future of human society depends on what happens to our experiments with that kind of home!

This is the conclusion of the whole matter, that not only is our real choice between two kinds of moral experimenting, up and down, and not only is that choice fraught with crucial significance personal and social, but also that only by this road can we ever come to Christian ethics with hope of understanding it. So many folk today seem to think that Christian morality is negative. Thou shalt not do this; thou

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Prayer

by Harry Emerson Fosdick

ETERNAL God, high above all yet in all, from Whom to be turned away is to fall, to Whom to be turned is to rise, and in Whom to abide is to stand fast forever, we worship Thee. Thou art very great. Like mountains whose summits are clad in clouds, so is Thy mystery to us. We Thy children on this wandering island in the sky, a speck amid the vasts of space, look up to Thee. O God, let us not be confounded by the empty spaces or afrighted by world beyond world unfathomable. As Thou hast put us into a great universe, help us to see behind it and in it a great God and lift up our minds to say, like our fathers before us, Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God.

Above all, we have come to Thee that Thou mightest make real to us the universe within. There lie our fortune and destiny, for there truth may walk in shining garments and goodness grow glorious and beauty be beautiful indeed. O Thou Who hast taught us through Thy Son that the Kingdom of Heaven is within us, make true, we beseech Thee this day, that description of our lives.

Meet us in the secret places of our souls. Walk Thou through the hidden rooms whence too often we have banished Thee. Let all that is low and abominable, selfish, vindictive, and of a mean report be put from us. Cast it down, discard it, good Lord, and lift up whatever is excellent and beautiful, august, unselfish, and of high repute.

Look upon the varieties of human need gathered here into our place of prayer. Some of us come to Thee in trouble and out of the depths we lift up our souls. O Thou Who canst take a day in winter and make it shine, do Thou, in the wintry season of our souls give us an illumined hour, and send us forth with such blue skies above us that it may seem the harbinger of spring and the promise of a summer's victory.

Some of us come to Thee in joy, fortunate in love, happy in our families, prosperous in our estate. O God, for every benediction that makes more tolerable the pilgrimage of human life and at times fills our souls with rejoicing, we thank Thee. Touch every happiness with sacredness, we beseech Thee. Melt it into unselfishness; translate it into service; let it not be clouded by pride; make it transparent so that Thy Spirit can shine through it to human good.

Some of us are young and come up out of the gates of the dawn. O Thou Who hast put in our control this fresh soil of a youthful life, help us not so to exhaust it by frivolity that when the autumn comes no harvest can grow. And some of us are old. Long ago we sang our matins in the morning; now we are ready for our evensong. Comfort us, we pray Thee, through the final days of our pilgrimage and let us catch foregleams of the eternal through the open door.

Some of us are strong. We are concerned about the good causes that mean weal to human life. In disinterested love of truth we give ourselves to science; we sincerely care for schools and homes and

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shalt not do that—they suppose that this is Christian morality. Upon the contrary, it is distinctly non-Christian morality. Jesus never built a moral fence in all his ministry—not one. Jesus was not a fence builder; he was a pioneer. In his concept of God, in his insight into human personality, in his unbuyable, unscareable integrity, in his magnanimity, sincerity, unselfishness, in his courageous loyalty to a cause that would not stop short of death, he always went a little farther. And the only negative moral effect that he ever has had on those who truly understood him lies in the simple fact that he aroused in them such enthusiasm for that kind of moral experimentation that they did not want to try any other.

Now, some moderns do see that much. They do perceive that genuine Christian morals are venturesome, not negative, and then they leap over to the opposite extreme. They say that Christian ethics is an impossible idealism. They say the Sermon on the Mount is an impracticable ideal, that it cannot be worked out in daily life; like stage money, it is good for theatrical presentation in the pulpit but it buys nothing in a common market. Upon the contrary, the true disciples of Jesus are not in that sense absolute idealists; they are practical experimenters with the Sermon on the Mount. What we could do in this world if we had enough of them—trying out brotherhood in international relationships, goodwill across the social lines, cooperation among the churches, justice in our economic life, and in our souls seeing what God might do with some of us before he is through! That is real moral experimentation. How shameful to give it low significance when it might be so divine!

The Garden of Gethsemane haunts me these days, and at the center of it that strange appealing figure who lived so long ago and yet who is ahead of us today, still going farther!

Prayer

ETERNAL God, our Father, we beseech Thee that if any have come in here with light thoughts and curious intentions, we may all find ourselves set down before a major fact of life, challenging to our consciences. Do serious business, Spirit of the living God, in the hearts of some of us who have worshipped here. O Thou alluring Christ, haunt us till we cannot be rid of Thee. Command us till we follow in Thy steps! Amen.

▽

Dr. Fosdick preached the foregoing sermon on April 6, 1930, at Temple Beth-El.

The following hymn was written by Dr. Fosdick for use as a Processional Hymn in the opening service of the Riverside Church. It is sung to the tune "Regent Square."

God of grace and God of glory,
On Thy people pour Thy power;
Crown Thine ancient church's story;
Bring her bud to glorious flower.
Grant us wisdom,
Grant us courage,
For the facing of this hour.

Lo! the hosts of evil round us
Scorn Thy Christ, assail his ways!
Fears and doubts too long have bound us.
Free our hearts to work and praise.
Grant us wisdom,
Grant us courage,
For the living of these days.

Cure Thy children's warring madness;
Bend our pride to Thy control;
Shame our wanton, selfish gladness,
Rich in things and poor in soul.
Grant us wisdom,
Grant us courage,
Lest we miss Thy Kingdom's goal.

Set our feet on lofty places;
Gird our lives that they may be
Armored with all Christlike graces
In the fight to set men free.
Grant us wisdom,
Grant us courage,
That we fail not man nor Thee!

Save us from weak resignation
To the evils we deplore;
Let the search for Thy salvation
Be our glory evermore.
Grant us wisdom,
Grant us courage,
Serving Thee whom we adore. Amen.

Comments from New York Newspapers regarding The Opening of the Riverside Church

Comment from "THE NEW YORK TIMES," October 7, 1930.

A New York Neighborhood

DR. FOSDICK, in the pulpit of the new Riverside Church, stressed beauty as one of the forms in which the Church must express itself for the enrichment of life. With that in mind the builders of the Riverside Church chose for their model the Cathedral at Chartres. They provided it with a site as lovely as can be found in New York City. That view up and down more than a score of miles of the Hudson and across the mile-wide stream to the Palisades is without parallel in any other metropolis. It takes on the character of grandeur.

With all deference to the tide of fashion which has been flowing for some years toward the East River, the residents of the Riverside section cannot but smile at the expedients to which the modish migrants are driven in order to make out a case for their new homes in terms of beauty. With the kindly aid of night draped over Welfare Island by a dexterous hand in charcoal or wash, and with the further aid of a powerful imagination which sees marginal boulevards and Babylonian floating gardens where are now chiefly smokestacks, it is possible to say something for the attractiveness of the East River. But the west riparian region of Manhattan does not have to wait for some day to be beautiful. Never by taking thought can the East River add a cubit to its moderate width, or build upon the opposite bank a backdrop of green and dun ramparts like that across the Hudson.

Beyond beauty this Riverside Morningside district has the promise of permanency above any other section on the island. Its character is guaranteed, as the real estate descriptions say, by the nature of the improvements so far made. In an area slightly more than half a mile long, from 110th Street to 122d Street, and slightly less than half a mile wide, from Morningside Avenue to Riverside Drive, are situated, in the order of acreage, Columbia University with Teachers' College and Barnard College, the Cathedral of St. John the Divine with its attendant group of buildings St. Luke's Hospital, the Union Theological Seminary, the new Riverside Church, the Jewish Theological Seminary, and Dr. Frank Damrosch's music college. Toward the north, beyond the dip of Manhattan Valley across which the British and the Americans fought the battle of Harlem Heights, but near enough to merge into the general picture of a neighborhood dedicated to aspiration and learning, are City College and, at a further remove, the majestic light-brick outcropping of the Medical Centre.

Even without padding the returns the one-quarter square mile of Morningside Heights proper would seem to be committed for many generations to its present uses and under its present semblance. The Financial District and the railway terminals will probably be in 1980 where they are today, though it is by no means certain in their present aspect. But the great cathedral, which has been nearly forty years in the building on Morningside Heights, and the new Riverside Church, which has captured much of medieval beauty with modern speed, will certainly be there in half a century, together with the buildings of Columbia University.

Comment from "THE NEW YORK TELEGRAM," on October 6, 1930.

A Cathedral Opens

A CROWD so great that when the last pew was filled a huge queue still half encircled the building yesterday attended the opening of Riverside Church, which with its monumental 400-foot tower is not only a marvel to the eye but a marvel of what American wealth is able to do.

The church is not built upon so grand a scale as the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, and yet it is of cathedral proportions, being modelled, in fact, after the Cathedral of Chartres. But while St. John's has been in process of construction for nearly forty years, and is yet far from completion, Harry Emerson Fosdick's beautiful church has risen complete in the minutest detail in a year and a few months. No waiting for funds. No patient dreaming from year to year of new stained glass windows. The Riverside Church was set up and delivered to its pastor like a limousine made for him at the order of admiring friends.

Dr. Fosdick's Church, largely the gift of the younger Rockefeller, is, though of the Baptist denomination, a church for all peoples. Its architecture, its interior appointments and its restrained ritual suggest at once the evangelistic and the Episcopal, and even the Roman—if the ruby light of the Host is not present there is an impressionistic suggestion of it in the ruby glows above the candelabra of the nave.

In the stained glass—not the heavy opalescent which befuddles the mood of most New York churches, but the singing, transparent pigments of the medievals; in the grand music of the organ; in the blue and white vestments of the serried choristers; in the recessional and the intoned distant "Amen" after the benediction; in the subduing of the lights, which glow swiftly like a magic garden blooming after the sermon —and all these things is the witchery of traditional ritualism snipped up by the gifts of up-to-the-minute artistry. But there is chastely missing something which has charged the atmosphere of churches throughout the history of worship — the familiar odors, whether of incense or of the bodies of perspiring men and perfumed women.

Even as the services were getting under way experts with the sensitive fabric of silk handkerchiefs made the last minute tests of the ventilators, which eradicated every pagan vestige of odor as they eliminated even the slightest variation in temperature. Remaining was the chaste and desensualized influence of color and line and harmonic sound.

Comment from "THE BROOKLYN DAILY EAGLE"

If the venerable and venerated Baptists of History might feel a certain shock from the structure itself, they would be even more disturbed by the noncredal trend of the former Park Avenue Baptist Church under the leadership of the Reverend Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick. Here is a clergyman who insists that a place of worship should be open every day of the year, and that any worshiping body ought to be in touch with all the interests, all the amusement trends, all the philanthropies of its age, who declares that "there is a religion, neither technical nor official nor conventional, which is a part of the thrilling human life about us," who owns freely that he reads detective stories for recreation, and whose eloquence has made a deep impression on this cosmopolitan community. "Beauty is a minister of God" is his apology for the new cathedral, "and we are right in building churches that will symbolize our faith in the supremacy of spiritual life by architecture that commands the eye."

The opening of the Riverside Cathedral is an epoch-making event in New York City. No religious edifice in all the history of the world has stood so distinctively as a symbol of the religion that minimizes cathechisms and appeals sympathetically to all humanity.

Comment from the "NEW YORK TELEGRAM," *October 16, 1930.*

The carved faces of Christ and Einstein looked down from their positions among the stone angels and apostles over the main portal of the Riverside Church on a crowd of 6,000 persons who sought to hear the first services there yesterday.

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Photo by Wm. Fox

Presentation of Bible to the Women's Bible Class, on the opening Sunday, September 28, 1930.

Women's Bible Class

Sepember 28th marked the beginning of the church year for the Women's Bible Class, when the beautiful auditorium of the Woman's Floor of the Tower was formally opened by a consecration service, arranged by Mrs. Katherine Willard Eddy, in which Dr. Fosdick, Dr. Carder and Mr. Hellstrom participated.

Because of the interest shown by Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Sr. in the class, in its formative period, the presentation to it, during this service, of a Bible once owned by her, was felt to be a particularly happy event. In a few well chosen words, Mr. William M. Crane, on behalf of the Building Committee, tendered this token to Mrs. Arthur E. Bestor, the president of the class, who accepted it as a signal for the opening of this floor of the Tower to the women's work of the church.

A week later, Dr. Mary Ely Lyman began a series of eight studies on "The Significance of Jesus for Modern Life." On successive Sunday mornings, at 9:45, she will discuss the following topics:

Oct. 5—The Interpretation of Jesus for To-Day.
Oct. 12—Jesus and His Own Times.
Oct. 19—The Life and Personality of Jesus.
Oct. 26—The Teachings of Jesus.
Nov. 2—The Kingdom of Heaven.
Nov. 9—Membership in the Kingdom.
Nov. 16—The Religious Consciousness of Jesus.
Nov. 23—The Experience of Jesus To-Day.

Dr. Lyman, a graduate of Mount Holyoke College and of Union Theological Seminary, has received her Ph. D. from the University of Chicago. For five years she was professor of Biblical Literature at Vassar College and is now a lecturer in English Bible at Union Seminary and Barnard College. She is a rare combination of attractive personality, scholarly ability, and skill in teaching.

For those who are especially interested in the development of the devotional spirit a small class in Personal Religion is being organized to meet each week, after November 1st.

The use of the Woman's Floor of the Tower as a social center began on October 6th with a dinner of the Business and Professional Women's Club and was followed, on October 9th, by a fellowship luncheon at which a group of leaders of welfare work and workers, in the Riverside community, were present as guests. On October 20th, the members of the Bible Class united, with other women's organizations of the church, in a devotional service in the chapel, which was followed by a social hour in the Tower.

Late in October, a series of musicales will be inaugurated. Every Thursday afternoon, at 3:00 o'clock, a half hour of music is to be given by pupils of the Damrosch Institute of Musical Art and others, following which, tea will be served, at 3:45, by the reside. Each Sunday. "Older young people," both men and women, will be welcome at tea, after the vesper service of the church.

A cordial invitation to participate in them awaits you, and *YOU* means all women of the church and congregation, the community, and the city. A desire for study, for service, for fellowship, is your entrance fee! Mrs. Eddy, the efficient and sympathetic executive secretary of the class, will be glad to help you to associate yourself with the group whose work interests you most, while Mrs. Bestor, the president of the class, will welcome an opportunity to enlist your sympathetic support and active help in carrying out its program.

Emma Williams Peck,
Chairman of Publicity Committee.

Photo by Ehrenford

"Jeremiah Capitals"

Jehovah likening the baskets of figs unto Israel.

Interior Stone of the Riverside Church

By Eugene C. Carder

"The Jeremiah Capitals."

ONE of the most interesting stories which is told in the decorative stone of the interior of the church is literally woven by the sculptors' skill around the capitals of the supporting pillars in the nave. All of the subjects treated here are taken from the Book of Jeremiah and when studied closely give in carved pictures and symbols a rather complete chronological record of the rich imagery and picturesque style of that Old Testament prophet. The book is fascinatingly colorful to read and when approached by an artist looking for a story that could be told in pictures, proved to be an inspired writing indeed.

The first chapter is treated on the pillar in the southwest corner which is partly imbedded in the wall at that point, the theme being the anointing of Jeremiah by Jehovah. The second chapter finds illustration on the similarly placed pillar across the nave in the southeast corner, the subject treated being the contrast between the holy life the people led in the wilderness as compared to the life of that same time in Jerusalem.

The sequence of the story will take the interested observer back across the nave again to the west aisle where chapters five to fourteen furnish pictures for the first column north of the south wall. Various prophecies of Jeremiah are suggested here, a characteristic picture being a single figure whose "tongue is a deadly arrow" and a group showing soldiers slaying a shepherd and scattering the sheep, as told in Chapter ten. (See picture reproduced in this issue.)

The pillar opposite this on the east aisle, being the first one north of the south wall, continues the prophecies of Jeremiah and in one case shows the prophet watching the potter at work, one imperfect vessel being destroyed and a second vessel made perfectly, as recorded in Jeremiah 18:4—"When the vessel that he made of the clay was marred in the hand of the potter, he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it."

The second capital on the west aisle continues the prophecies and begins with the history of Israel before the fall of Jerusalem. One of the photographs accompanying this article shows a portion of this ornamentation, the scene represented being Jehovah showing Jeremiah two baskets of figs, one good and one bad, like unto Israel of the captivity and Israel staying in Jerusalem.

The opposite column continues the story as found in chapters twenty-six and thirty-two.

Having followed the sequence from the west pillar to the east pillar and back to this point, the visitor will find the story unfolds continuously up to the scenes from the final chapters of the book as depicted on the capitals of the pillar in the northwest wall just to the right of the Reading Desk.

The Front of the First Galley

Four figures in carved stone are found on the front of the first gallery. They represent four groups of Old Testament characters, the Patriarchs, Prophets, Kings and Judges. The particular figures reading from east to west are:

Moses, representing the Patriarchs
Amos, representing the Prophets
David, representing the Kings
Gideon, representing the Judges

The Six Preachers

High up on the back wall of the nave, in six niches from which they look out over the upper gallery toward the chancel of the

Photo by Ehrenford

"Jeremiah Capitals"

Group showing soldiers scattering sheep and slaying shepherd.

church, more than two hundred feet away, stand six figures in heroic size, representing six of the great preachers of Christendom.

John Chrysostom (347-407 A. D.) is the first in this series, he whose very name means "golden mouthed" and who was the first truly great exponent of Christianity, who also reached the heights of greatness as a rhetorician and a preacher. He was the last of the Christian Sophists who had come through the school of heathen rhetoric into leadership of a high order in the Christian Church.

St. Augustine, (Aurelius) (354-430 A. D.) the most celebrated father of the Latin church, was a convert to Christianity from the Manicheans, influenced in this step by his mother, Monica. Augustine was Christianity's great champion in the midst of the onslaughts of the Donatists and the Pelagians.

Girolamo Savonarola (1452-1498) was a patriot, reformer, and preacher whose career has hardly been matched in all history. Florence was the scene of his great triumphs and in this city over which, though a priest of the church, he had once been the virtual dictator, he was put to death in 1498. Savonarola stands here, only in part, for his eloquence. He made religion mean something in his own day. We are interested in him primarily as an effective and fearless apostle of righteousness.

Hugh Latimer (1485-1555). This distinguished preacher and priest lived in a very difficult time. The very names of the public men with whom he had to deal and the religious leaders who were his contemporaries suggest violence. He knew what it was to be a Bishop and also to have that high place wrested from him. He was in and out of prison many times and finally was burned to death at Balliol College in 1555. Here again we lift to a high place in our building the statue of a man who was faithful even unto death.

John Wesley (1703-1791). The Methodist Episcopal Church has been such an effectively aggressive instrument of evangelization and Christian service in the actual experience of the generation now living that John Wesley, its founder, seems to belong to us all in a peculiar sense. He was a prodigious and tireless worker, a scholar of high attainments, an unsurpassed preacher in his time, and the founder of a church which carried the Episcopal tradition over into a popular and democratic movement.

Phillips Brooks (1835-1893). It would be worthwhile building a church or a shrine anywhere in America if for no other reason than to give recognition to the name and spirit of Phillips Brooks. We cannot add anything to his fame or to his place in the hearts of the American people. We can only pray that something of his broad humanity, his quick and understanding sympathy, his Christlike spirit, may find expression in and through this congregation and from this pulpit.

▽

(*Continued from page 235*)

Only 2,500 obtained seats in the nave and galleries. Another 800 were given seats in the basement, where amplifiers carried the words of Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick, the pastor.

Society and the slums, fur coats and rags were represented in the great crowd outside.

Several cripples were taken out of the line by policemen and escorted to seats inside. One aged woman with a broken hip in the cast was discovered after she had been standing in line a half hour.

Amidst the beauty of the high-vaulted nave with the ruby lights overhead and the sun streaming in through colored windows Dr. Fosdick reminded the worshippers that "Christianity began in a carepenter's shop."

The Unhappy Hunting Grounds

By Margaret T. Applegarth

ON how many an evening when the moon is a mere crescent in the sky and the flames go licking gaily over the logs, has the tale not been told at wigwamdoorways of that dim distant day when the Great Spirit first made man—of clay he made him, to be baked in an oven: but without the setting of sky and fire and the grunt of an Indian grandmother, how shall mere ink convey to you the proper picture-esqueness of the tale? For when the Great Spirit took this first clay creative out of the oven it was such a pale underdone specimen that he grunted out a disappointed "h'm!" and set him aside to cool. And this was the first white man ever made.

Wiser by this mistake, a second mixture of clay was shoved into the oven and left there double the time; but alas, when the door was opened, behold a figure so burnt and so blackened that the Great Spirit realized he had failed again. "H'm!" he grunted, provoked. And this, of course, was the first Negro. So then, very cautiously, a third batch of clay was mixed, made just so, left in just long enough—and lo! the result was perfect! Richly browned to a delicious redness, which has delighted the Great Spirit and the red man himself from that day to this.

Following her tale of creation, the Indian story teller would paint just as miraculous tales of a wonderful tomorrow in fabulously happy hunting grounds, where the rivers would be full of fish and the forests full of prey,—fuller even than the marvelous present. . . .

But one by one as this present day has seen tepees and hunting grounds and freedom fading into a racial memory while the too-pale white man dominated the scene from sunrise to sunset, the red man has begun wondering what the future could possibly hold for him, with so much glory shorn away.

But there is a new glory in store! The tale of it has been mentioned now and again in our church by Ataloa, herself an Indian, whose salary the Woman's Society delights to maintain. For Ataloa sees both sides of the picture, the old glory and the new, as she teaches in Bacone College and prepares her students for their unknown futures. If making over tepee and wigwam and pueblo into a Home Sweet Home may sometimes seem like a very unhappy hunting ground to the new graduate, then the real zest of their hunt is yet to come: for when did red men ever seek the easy prey or the simple victories? Their glory has always been trial by endurance, conquest by courage, victory through skill and finesse and patience.

At half past ten on Monday morning, November third, the Woman's Society is planning a program of true stories of these graduates; we believe you will be gripped by their ingenuity in overcoming the tremendous odds they face. November is a month when it is peculiarly interesting to remember the part Indians played in the early history of our colonies—we want to add new local color to your knowledge of these fascinating "first Americans."

For The Woman's Society.

Weekly Schedule in the Riverside Church

So many people ask about our mid-week program and the various types of services that go on in the building that we are publishing herewith the schedule for the week of October nineteenth to twenty-sixth, just as it appeared in the Calendar of the church on Sunday, October nineteenth.

Other services in the Church today:

3:30 P. M.—The Friend's Worship Service.
4:00 P. M.—The Ministry of Music.

Meetings under the auspices of the Riverside Guild:

5:30 P. M.—Informal Tea for Guild members.
6:30 P. M.—The Arts and Letters Society. *Subject*—An illustrated talk on Gothic Architecture
The Human Relations Group—*Subject*: "The Effect of Unemployment on the Morale of the Individual."
7:30 P. M.—The Hour of Worship in the Assembly Hall. *Theme*: "The Lord's Prayer." A dramatization of "The Lord's Prayer" as written by Francois Coppée. All are invited.

Monday, October twentieth
Inauguration of the Women's Work—
3:00 P. M.—Meeting in the Chapel.
6:30 P. M.—Dinner for the Business and Professional Women's Club.
7:30 P. M.—Interest groups of the Business and Professional Women's Club.

Tuesday, October twenty-first
3:30-4.30 P. M.—Gymnasium Practice for Juniors.
4:30-5:15 P. M.—The Junior Choir.
MEN'S NIGHT PROGRAM—
4:15-5:15 P. M.—Gymnasium Period for Manhattanville Boys.
5:00-10:30 P. M.—Gymnasium and Bowling Alleys are open.
6:30 P. M.—Dinner. Reservations should be made to Mr. Kite, Monument 2900, not later than 10:00 A. M. on Tuesday. Dinner is served for one dollar.
8:00 P. M.—Interest Groups.

Wednesday, October twenty-second
6:30 P. M.—Church Night Supper.
8:00 P. M.—The second lecture in the series "Faiths that Keep Life Worth Living."
Dr. Fosdick will speak on "Faith in the Possibility of Individual Happines."

Thursday, October twenty-third
8:00 P. M.—The Riverside Guild Program for Young People.
8:30 P. M.—The Choral Society.

Friday, October twenty-fourth
3:30-5:15 P. M.—Junior gymnasium hour and other activities.
5:00 P. M.—The High School Council.
7:00-10:30 P. M.—High School Night. Recreational and social program for both Junior and Senior High School groups.

Services Next Sunday, October twenty-sixth

9:30 A. M.—The Riverside Church School.
The Parents of Younger Children's Group, Speaker, Miss Hally Flack. *Subject*: "The Emotional Needs of the Home."
The Parents of Adolescents Group. Speaker, Dr. Bigelow. *Subject*: "The Characteristics of Adolescence."
9:30 A. M.—The Women's Bible Class—"The Life and Personality of Jesus"—Speaker, Dr. Lyman.
9:45 A. M.—The Men's Class—"Trying to be a Christian in Business." Speaker, Mr. J. Howard Ardrey.
10:00 A. M.—The Service of Worship.
3:30 P. M.—The Friends' Meeting.
4:00 P. M.—The Ministry of Music Service.
5:30 P. M.—The Guild Tea and group meetings.
7:30 P. M.—The Hour of Worship in the Assembly Hall.

THE CHURCH MONTHLY

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The Ministry of Music

Throughout the winter we will be worshipping at the four o'clock hour on Sundays in the service which will be known as the "Ministry of Music."

Once each month the series will be interrupted to give opportunity for the celebration of the Lord's supper which occurs regularly on the first Sunday. It is Mr. Milligan's hope that these Sunday afternoon services may express, in the music of the great masters, in oratorios and in special programs of varied interest, the very heart and spirit of worship. The choir of fifty voices will be assisted from time to time by instrumentalists and soloists who will be guest artists for particular programs.

****

Articles by Dr. Fosdick appearing in December magazines, are as follows:

Editorial, "Everybody's Christmas" in the December issue of The Pictorial Review.

"Christmas and the Family" in the Country Home.

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PRAYER

(*Continued from page 232*)

communities; we lift up our thoughts for the nation and pray for a day of international neighborhood. O God, put courage into our hearts, wisdom into our minds, strength into our arms. Let us not by any temporary failure be swayed. Give us a long look and a deep faith in the Kingdom of God that shall come on earth, and send us forth, we beseech Thee, with the baptism of Thy Spirit so to live and work that we shall help to leave behind us a fairer earth in which Thou canst rear Thy human family. We ask it in the spirit of Jesus. Amen.

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right fingers play upon us. That was the ministry of Christ,—may he work through this church!—to bring out abundant life in personality.

Prayer

ETERNAL Spirit, from whom come our peace and power, we beseech Thee for this worshiping assembly. Help us to worship Thee, Who art Spirit, in spirit and in truth. Cross Thou the inner thresholds of our lives. Open Thou the hidden closets and cupboards there and see if there be any wicked way in us, and lead us in the way everlasting. Amen.

▽

Dr. Fosdick preached the foregoing sermon on October 5, 1930.